

Neighbors in Need



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

2025 Leader's Guide

Joining together in the struggle for justice and peace

Dear friends,

In 2025 congregations across the United Church of Christ will collect the Neighbors in Need offering. This thought gives me great hope. It is easy to think of ministry as a fractured enterprise, where every church is isolated on its own. Yet I know through the Special Mission Offerings of the UCC, we are stronger together.

The money collected through the Neighbors in Need offering is shared, with two-thirds benefiting the justice and witness ministries of the UCC, including grants awarded for direct service and advocacy initiatives of local congregations and partners. One-third of the offering benefits the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM).

I encourage you to collect this offering in your congregation. Share stories of what the UCC's Office of Public Policy and Advocacy is doing in Washington, D.C., or highlight the long-term partnership and witness the whole of the United Church of Christ has with CAIM.

If you have any questions about Neighbors in Need, or any of our Special Mission Offerings, I invite you to be in touch. You can reach me at mcdonaldr@ucc.org. May God bless our shared ministry!



The Rev. Rachel McDonald works for the National Ministries of the UCC as Generosity Officer, OCWM and Special Mission Offerings. The four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ are One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund. Together, they demonstrate a commitment to building a just world for all. To learn more, go to https://www.ucc.org/ocwm_special-support/

Did you know?

Neighbors in Need

Offering History

Neighbors in Need was affirmed as an all-church offering in a 1999 General Synod resolution. The resolution states: “Through this offering we will express our deep commitment to reaching out and touching neighbors with justice and compassion. This will allow us to speak prophetically to those in power and to advocate for a society where all people have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.”

What are the justice and witness ministries?

Two-thirds of the Neighbors in Need offering supports ministries of justice in the UCC. This includes the following teams at the National Ministries: Education for Faithful Action and the Washington D.C. Office of Public Policy and Advocacy. Neighbors in Need grants additionally fund the work of local UCC congregations and partners in direct service and advocacy.

Who is CAIM?

Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and northern Nebraska. Today, there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. CAIM supports these local churches and their pastors. In addition, CAIM strives to be a resource for more than 1,000 people from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations, strengthening their participation in the life of the church.



Photo from a Pentecost Witness for a Moral Budget, June 2025

Promotional Materials

Digital promotional materials

- Poster image
- Powerpoint slides
- Social media images
- “Plain text” bulletin and newsletter copy and more!

Physical items

- Poster
- Offering envelopes



**SCAN HERE or visit
www.ucc.org/nin to
learn more, download
resources, or donate**

**Suggested
Offering Date
October 5th**

Download Public Witness Signs:
<https://www.ucc.org/download-public-witness-signs/>

Ways to give

Online

Any congregation is welcome to utilize the United Church of Christ's online giving platform at www.ucc.org/give. There, people can designate their gift to Neighbors in Need or any other Special Mission Offering.

Through your congregation

You can utilize offering envelopes or your own congregation's giving platform. Be sure to set up a way for people to designate gifts. Once collected, send gifts to your Conference or to the National Ministries.

Publicizing the offering

You know your congregation best. Do they love a silly skit? Clear instructions via email? Encouragement via a sermon? Here are a few ideas:

- Share about the offering in a children's message
- Send out a letter to those in your congregation encouraging giving
- Preach on the focus text (Galatians 6:2)
- Place the offering envelopes in the bulletin a few weeks ahead of time
- Hang up the Neighbors in Need poster in a prominent place

Mission Moment

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul encourages the church to “carry each other's burdens.” This seems to be a clear enough encouragement. Why then, does he also say just a few verses later, “for each one should carry their own load?”

This scripture highlights a dynamic many of us face when we help others or receive help. There's a difference between helping someone and taking over for them. Inversely, it can be both challenging and a source of comfort to receive care. Giving and receiving, with autonomy, is an integral part of justice ministries.

When the United Church of Christ gathers to collect the Neighbors in Need offering, we work to honor this complexity. The money collected supports the work of the UCC's Washington D.C. Office for Public Policy and Advocacy. The advocacy done in this office can be on behalf of churches, but most of the time, it involves partnership with congregations and church members across the nation. The work is shared through collective advocacy, with and for one another.

Contributing to this offering allows us to share one another's burdens. Two-thirds of your donation supports the UCC's justice and witness ministries, such as the D.C. Office. The remaining one-third supports the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM), which has been witnessing to Native values and culture as a vital part of the UCC since 1971.

Thank you for your gifts as we work together, sharing our burdens to support our Neighbors in Need.

**Council for
American Indian
Ministries**

**20+ CAIM churches
supported**

The following ministry teams are supported in part by Neighbors in Need:

- Office for Public Policy and Advocacy
- Economic Justice
- Environmental Justice
- Racial Justice
- Disabilities and Mental Health Justice
- Immigration Justice
- Gender and Sexuality Ministries

Offering Distribution

**Ministries of justice
and compassion**

26 Neighbors in Need Grants awarded in 2025

Including En Vivo Church, Juniper Formation UCC, Martin Luther King International Ministry, The Giving Circle Church, and more!

